



In the Name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

عن تقرير جامعة هارفرد المعنون "الاسلام في أمريكا"

Commenting
on Harvard University's
"Islam in America"
Report

The report titled "Islam in America", which took Harvard University's Pluralism Project more than two decades to put together, is very interesting, especially to Muslims and non-Muslims who are interested in history, theology, comparative religion and anthropology. It mentions my name twice, my two organizations which I founded in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1973 and in Falls Church, Virginia, in 1982, and a newsletter I started in January of 1974, namely *Islamic Affairs*. Here, I would like to state the reasons behind this exposure, hoping you will find this material interesting. You are free to use what I have included in this PDF file as you see fit without having to contact me. You may reproduce it in any way, shape or form, use its material for an article, an essay, a thesis, a book..., or even a documentary film! If you decide to make a documentary of it, taking advantage of my *Memoirs*, I suggest you use this title for it: "The trouble-making tribesman!" Yes, I belong to a deeply rooted Arab tribe.

The said report by Harvard University is quoted below, and I had attached to it screen shots of some of my books which Amazon is marketing but changed my mind later. If you wish to receive those screen shots, just let me know.

In all reality, I never expected to stay in the U.S. for more than few years to finish my graduate courses, get my degree and return home to teach at a university, but God had a different plan for me, a much better one. He always looks after us and does what is best for us even when we think otherwise due to our ignorance or weak faith.

In 1972, I was teaching English at a vocational institution in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province, in the city of Huffof, al-Ahsa, to be exact, so I took the opportunity to apply to study for a graduate degree in the U.S. Three American universities granted me admission:

- 1) Atlanta (now Clark Atlanta) University, Atlanta, Georgia
- 2) Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
- 3) New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico

I reached the U.S. on August 13, 1972 and took the bus from the country's northeast, i.e. New York City, to its southwest, that is, Las Cruces, New Mexico, then to Atlanta, Georgia. After touring the schools listed above, I set my mind on studying at Atlanta (now Clark Atlanta) University. Few weeks after the start of my studies, I found myself involved in Islamic activities organized by the city's local chapter of the Muslim Students Association

of the U.S. and Canada (MSA). I had the opportunity to lead the Friday congregational prayers at the school's Canterbury House, a small house which it had set aside for the students to worship and meditate. The next year, 1973, I found myself inaugurating the Islamic Center of Atlanta, but soon thereafter I became an outcast, a social pariah, because some Indian and Pakistani community members convinced the African-American converts to Islam that I was not following the "mainstream" type of Islam, i.e. Sunni Islam, so I was not qualified to lead them in congregational prayers. Thus, I was removed from all Islamic activities at the said Center and at the MSA chapter. Those who used to pray behind me as their leader now ran away whenever they saw me, as if they saw a demon, so that they would not be branded by others for speaking to me. I documented all this in my *Memoirs*. If you wish to receive a copy of these *Memoirs*, write me.

In the fall of that year, 1973, I founded the Islamic Society of Georgia, Inc. with some Pakistani friends. After two American attorneys' failure to get the tax exemption status for my Society, I interfered and acted as the Society's "attorney" or representative with the city's federal office of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) on Peachtree Road in downtown Atlanta. I do not know if it is still there. I succeeded where both attorneys failed and obtained the tax exemption status which cleared the way for my Society to start publishing and circulating Islamic literature throughout the U.S. Copies of the first issue of our newsletter, *Islamic Affairs*, were mailed out in January of 1974. It evolved from a modest 4-page newsletter into a 12-page bulletin with a thick cover and with readers not only in all 50 American States but also in 67 countries

overseas. You will see some of its cover designs below.

In 1975, I received instructions to facilitate the entry to the United States of the very first representative of the then Grand Ayatollah, the late Abul-Qasim al-Khoei, in North America. This representative was Shaykh (or Shaikh or Sheikh, you choose) Muhammad Sarwar of Quetta, Pakistan, near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

Of course the Shaykh had to apply for an entry visa to the U.S. He first tried to obtain it from the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad which I believe was represented there by a third country due to bad relations between Iraq and the U.S. following the 1973 war and the oil embargo which Iraq started and which created so much uproar and animosity towards not only Iraq but all other Arab countries. Using their mighty news media machine, the Jewish community utilized that hatred, intensifying it to the maximum they could scheme. The Shaykh failed to obtain the visa, so he was advised to do so in Iran, Germany and the United Kingdom. Followers of al-Khoei in these countries acted as guides and hosts for the Shaykh and helped him with accommodations and travel expenses.

The request to facilitate the entry of Shaykh Sarwar into the United States was first directed not to me but to New York's Shi'a Association of North America (SANA), which was founded by my late great friend, Ghulam-Raza Hassan Ali (or, according to the way East-African Shi'as spell their names, Ghulamreza Hassanali), who had migrated to the United States with his family from Dares-Salam, Tanzania. SANA is believed to be the very first Shi'ite organization established in the United States: It was

founded in the early 1970s, perhaps a year or two before I founded the Islamic Society of Georgia, Inc.

When Hassan-Ali spoke to me about the Shaykh being given the run-around, asking me to do whatever I could to help him, I had to think for a while of the matter. Then I called my Society's attorney to ask for his advice in this regard. The attorney advised me to send the Shaykh, who was at the time in London, a package containing the following documents:

- 1) an affidavit, i.e. a letter of sponsorship which I typed on my Society's stationery indicating that he was the Shaykh's personal sponsor and guarantor, that I pledged not to let this cleric work in the United States, and that the visa applicant, if granted the visa, would abide by U.S. laws, rules and regulations,
- 2) a copy of the Bylaws of the Islamic Society of Georgia, Inc., of which I was the General Secretary,
- 3) constitution of the Islamic Society of Georgia, Inc., and
- 4) some copies of the *Islamic Affairs* newsletter.

The package, which later proved to be quite useful, arrived after the Shaykh had already made another failed bid in London to obtain the entry visa to the United States; so, he was advised to go to Lebanon to try his luck. In Beirut, he was subjected to a foiled kidnapping attempt as the country was embroiled in civil war; so, the Shi'ites there were very much concerned about his safety: They whisked him out of Beirut in the depth of the night to Damascus

which was to be his last attempt following which he would return to Najaf, Iraq, to resume his studies at the *hawza*. In Damascus, Shaykh Sarwar submitted the package I sent him during the interview, and he was finally able to obtain his entry visa. What a relief it is!

The Shaykh did, indeed, arrive at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport on January 25, 1976, a very important date in the history not only of the Shi'ite community of North American but of that of the whole Islamic world due to the *tabligh* activities that resulted from the establishment of such a monumental Shi'ite institution like the Khoei Center in an important part of the world.

A few days after Shaykh Muhammad Sarwar had arrived at New York, he went to Texas according to the invitation of some Shi'a converts whom I had encouraged to write to his boss, al-Khoei, to request him to send someone to teach them the tenets of their faith. While staying in Houston, Texas, he called me to ask me if he had to apply for a visa to go to Georgia! It seems that he was still haunted by the "visa" ghost! Few days after that, the Shaykh became my roommate in Atlanta, Georgia, and I really enjoyed his company. We used to go together in my clunker car to the Farmers Market in a city suburb to shop for fruits and vegetables in order to change the scene and save some money.

I trained the Shaykh Sarwar at my apartment on the preparation of newsletters and different publications, especially in the areas of typesetting, art designs and layout, steps required for making a "cold camera-ready

copy" before being sent to the press. We are talking about printing 38 years ago. According to him, the Shaykh was sent to the United States with specific instructions from the late Grand Ayatollah Abul-Qasim al-Khoei to do the following:

1. start a regular newsletter or magazine,
2. produce a new English translation of the Holy Qur'an,
3. write books for Muslim children and adults,
4. collect religious taxes and solve community problems, whether or not they are related to religion

Upon its completion, Shaykh Sarwar's English translation of the Holy Qur'an was published by Tahrike-Tarsile-Qur'an, Inc. (Distribution of Holy Qur'an, Inc.) of New York, a publishing house established and managed by my respectful friend, Aunali Khalfan, and his great family. For your information, Khalfan was instrumental in the publication for the first time ever of a text of the Holy Qur'an in Braille language for the blind. He has been publishing not only various translations of the Holy Qur'an but also some other top quality Islamic books, including many published by Ansariyan; their list now tops five thousand. One of the books which Khalfan has published and is now marketing is *Peak of Eloquence: Nahjul Balagha* which is compiled by al-Sharif al-Radi, and which I edited, with an Introduction by Martyr Murtadha Mutahhari. This title is marketed world-wide by other American book sellers as well. May the Almighty bless Aunali's efforts and reward them in the life of this world and in the Hereafter, *Allahomma Ameen* اللهم آمين.

As for the magazine which the Shaykh was instructed to issue, it was given the title *The Message of Islam*. It was, indeed, founded in early February of 1976 under the supervision of Shaykh Sarwar not in Atlanta, Georgia, but in Houston, Texas, shortly before the Shaykh came to me in Atlanta to be my roommate for few months, as indicated above. Its publication was made possible through help from the Shi`ite community in Houston members of which had written al-Khoei requesting him to send them a scholar to teach them Shi`ite Islam as I had suggested to them. During his stay at my very modest apartment (so modest, its monthly rent at the time was only \$98 exclusive of utilities, and yes, you can call it whatever you want!) in Atlanta, Georgia, the Shaykh put out two editions of this magazine. Thereafter, the Shaykh moved from Atlanta to New York City where there have always been a much larger Shi`ite population and where a fourth edition of *The Message of Islam* was published. To the best of my knowledge, this magazine disappeared after the publication and distribution of its fourth edition. In New York, Shaykh Muhammad Sarwar founded the Khoei Center.

A question forces itself here is: Did the Marji`iyya, the highest religious authority, that sent this Shaykh to the U.S., express any appreciation for what I did to its representative, i.e. facilitating his entry into the United States? The obvious answer is: Of course not.

Later on, unfortunately a controversy developed because of which the New York Shi`ite community requested the late Grand Ayatollah al-Khoei to remove Shaykh Muhammad Sarwar from office and to appoint someone

else in his place. The great sage sent in 1982 one of his sons, namely martyr Sayyid Abdul-Majid al-Khoei, on a fact-finding mission and to prepare for the establishment of the Khoei Foundation, the very first major institution established by Najaf's *marji`iyya* مرجعية in the Western world.

That year, 1982, ended Sarwar's term which started in 1976. He was replaced, after a bitter and costly court battle, by Shaykh Fadhil al-Sahlani, an Iraqi Shaykh from Basra (some say Nasiriyya). Shaykh al-Sahlani has been efficiently running the Foundation, School and Center ever since. In the process of those court hearings, I, in my capacity as Sarwar's personal sponsor, was requested to submit a signed statement indicating that the late Grand Ayatollah al-Khoei was Sarwar's boss and that the latter was obligated to follow his orders; otherwise, he would be insubordinate. I complied, composing and signing such a statement as requested in his capacity as the one who helped him come to the United States and acted as his guarantor. The statement was presented before the judge who ruled that Sarwar should step down from his office and hand over all documents and assets to Shaykh Fadil al-Sahlani, the new representative of al-Khoei to the faithful in the United States and Canada.

The present building of the Khoei Foundation, which is located in Jamaica, New York, was opened seven years after that incident, that is, on the 15th of Sha`ban 1409 A.H./March 25,1989, in order to meet the religious needs of the Muslim community in the United States. The religious programs are conducted in Arabic, Urdu, Persian and, of course, English. Presently, the address of the Khoei

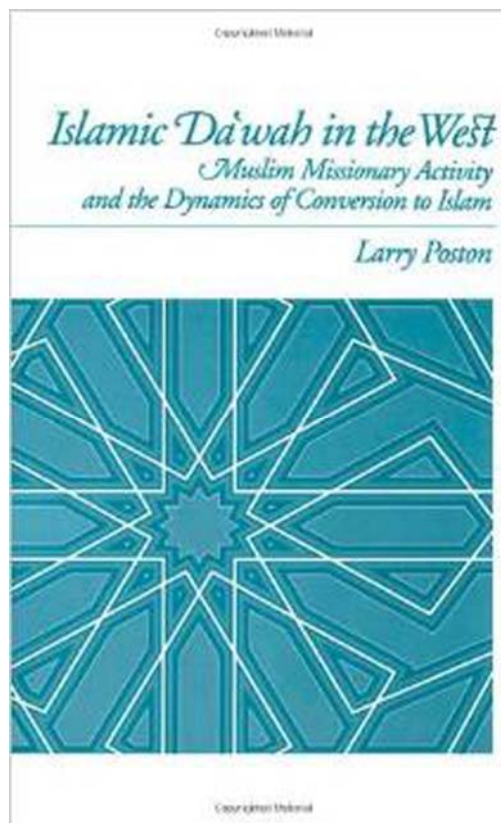
Foundation is 13711 90th Avenue, and that of the Khoei Center is 8989 Van Wyck Expressway, both located in Jamaica, a suburb of New York City. The latter includes a mosque, a school and resident imam's quarters as well as a modern library, kitchen and cafeteria.

In the same year, that is, 1989, the Grand Ayatollah al-Khoei established the London branch of this Foundation, appointing his son, late Sayyid Muhammed Taqi al-Khoei, as its head. It is now located on Chevening and Salusbury roads. Its board, upon establishment, was comprised of these dignitaries: Sayyid Muhammed Taqi al-Khoei, Shaykh Muhsin Ali al-Najafi, Shaykh Yousuf Nafsi, Sayyid Muhammed al-Mousawi (of Bombay, India), Sayyid Fadil al-Milani, Sayyid Majid al-Khoei (another son of the late al-Khoei), Shaykh Hajj Kadhim Abdul-Hussain, the late Dr. Sayyid Muhammed Ali Shahrastani (a world renown philanthropist and founder of the Open Islamic University in London, a man who was born in Iraq and who had descended from an Iranian family), and al-Hajj Mustafa Kawkal. Sayyid Taqi al-Khoei was succeeded in this post by his brother, the late Sayyid Abdul-Majid al-Khoei who was assassinated in Najaf, Iraq, on Thursday, April 10, 2003. Following this tragic incident, Sayyid Yousuf al-Khoei, another son of the late Grand Ayatollah, became director of London's Khoei Foundation. Another branch of the Khoei Foundation was established in Montreal, Canada, but information about it has not been available at the time when this text has been compiled for the kind reader.

Reference to the historic mission of Shaykh Muhammad Sarwar exists in one of the earliest books written about

Islam and Muslims in the United States: It is this great reference which mentions the Shaykh on p. 109:

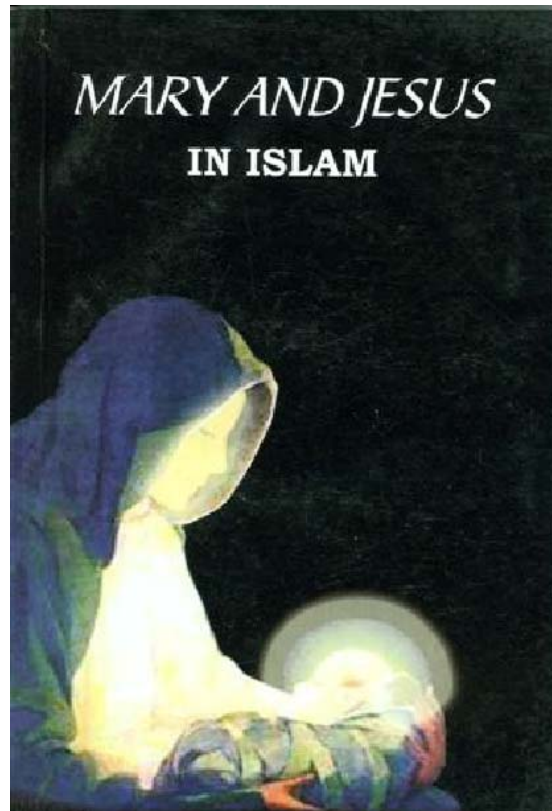
Larry Poston, *Islamic Da'wah in the West: Muslim Missionary Activity and the Dynamics of Conversion to Islam* (Oxford University Press, 1992), ISBN 0-19-507227-8

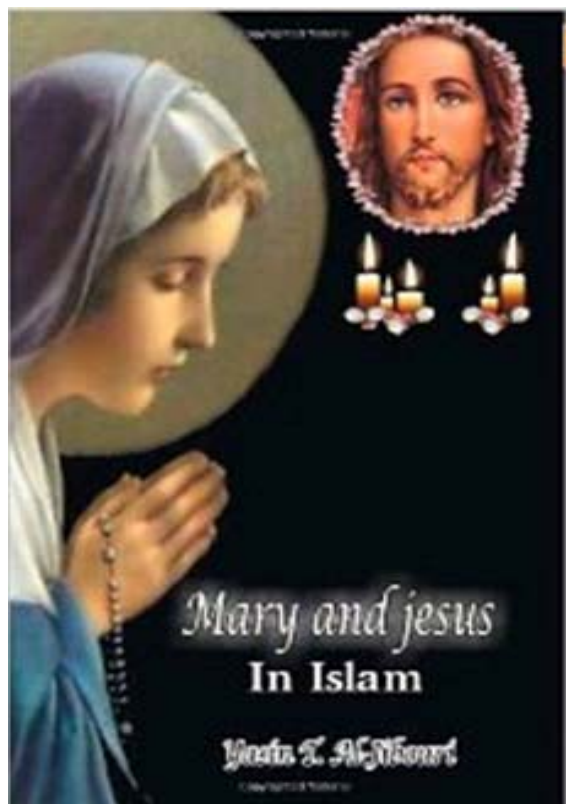
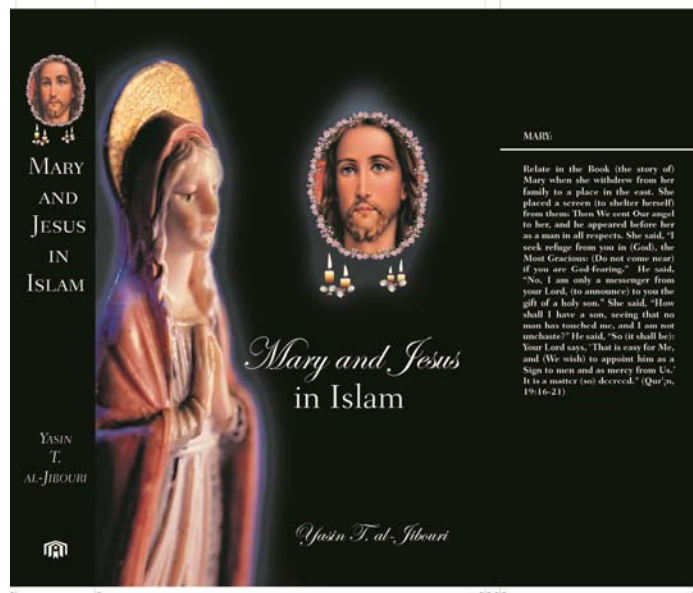


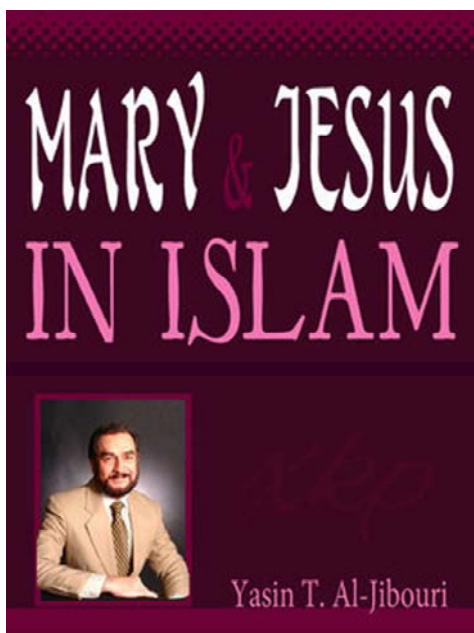
Besides, I have included the above and much, much more, including the complete biography of his late Holiness al-Khoei, in my book titled Mary and Jesus in Islam three editions of which have already been published by:

1. (Ansariyan Publications, Qum, Iran 2009) ISBN 978-964-219-064-5
2. (Authorhouse, Bloomington, Indiana, U.S.A. 2011) ISBN 978-1-4685-2321-8
3. (Yasin Publication [Newington, Virginia, U.S.A., but printed in London, United Kingdom, in 2014]) ISBN 978-1-4992-3610-1

Images of the front covers of these books are:







Harvard University's report also mentions *Islamic Affairs* newsletter.

I started editing and publishing my Society's newsletter *Islamic Affairs* which evolved from a four-page newsletter to a twelve-page bulletin, becoming the most widely circulated Shi'ite publication in the United States with readers in all 50 U.S. States and 67 countries

abroad, prompting the Society to seek help from a local company to maintain its vast computerized mailing list and print address labels for distributing *Islamic Affairs* by mail. All issues of this newsletter were printed and mailed out throughout the States and abroad free of charge, thanks to the generosity of its eager readers and supporters. Seldom has a Shi'ite publication lived for so long while being supported by voluntary contributions in addition to the generosity of its founders. Just to give you an idea about how powerful that newsletter was, I would like here to narrate the following incident for you:

"Vol. 1, No. 4 issue of *Islamic Affairs* featured an article about Imām Ali عليه السلام, and the issue was extremely popular, so much so that we had to reprint it three times. Nevertheless, one day I needed a copy of that issue in order to reprint it for the fifth time, so I kept calling some of its recipients in Atlanta trying to borrow it from them.

Everyone I called told me that he/she had given it to someone else and that it kept in circulation till he lost track of it. The Library of Atlanta's Emory University was a regular recipient of *Islamic Affairs* because it has a department of theology, so I went there and spoke with the librarian after introducing myself as the editor-in-chief of *Islamic Affairs*. The librarian went away and looked for the newsletter. After a while, she returned to tell me that one of the university's professors had borrowed it and was using it as a teaching tool in his classes. I inquired about when he would return it, and the lady told me that it would be returned two weeks later. She wrote a note to herself not to let anyone borrow it other than myself for the time being. Exactly two weeks later, I returned to the library and asked for my copy of the newsletter. The same lady went and brought it to me. I was grateful but deeply disappointed: The professor had written so many notes on it in ink so he would explain its contents to his students, it could not be reproduced at all." This incident shows you how popular and powerful *Islamic Affairs* was. In his book titled *Islamic Da'wah in the West: Muslim Missionary Activity and the Dynamics of Conversion to Islam* (Oxford University Press, 1992), Larry Poston mentions *Islamic Affairs* four times.

In 2003, after the fall of the dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussein, which had passed a hanging sentence against me in absentia, I returned home after so many years: The last time I was in Iraq was in 1971. My foot touched the Iraqi soil on September 3, 2003. Praise is due to Allah, the harsh living conditions and the absence of services did not stop me from continuing my intellectual activities: Since then, I have been writing, editing and translating many books, so

much so that the number of all my most important publications now stands at 68, and if you wish to receive a PDF file containing details of them, just send me an email.

Now you realize that Harvard University did not choose my name arbitrarily to represent the activities of Shi'a Muslims in America. This most prestigious University does not do anything arbitrarily...

This report/comment is written for history. Seldom have Shi'a Muslims documented their history, so I would like to be the exception to this rule. I reiterate my full authorization for this report to be reproduced, in part or as a whole, and disseminated for the benefit of those who believe that history is mankind's best teacher. Presently, I am working on producing a new translation of the Holy Qur'an, so if you like this report, I request you to plead to the Almighty to enable me to finish this task. May He accept our deeds seeking to please Him, and only Him, for pleasing His servant is an impossible task..., Wassalamo Alaikom.

Yasin T. al-Jibouri

Thul-Hijja 8, 1435 A.H./October 3, 2014 A.D.





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

It is not difficult to tell the difference between *Islamic Affairs* and other Islamic publications. We do not, and shall never, claim that it is superior to them (as some would like to think of themselves). *Islamic Affairs* deals with Islam whereas other publications deal mostly with Muslims, and there is a great deal of difference, unfortunately, between the first and the latter. I was told once by a friend of mine that the difference between Islam and Muslims is like the difference between the oyster and the pearl. How true!

Islam has the best way of life the Almighty intended for man to lead, yet Muslims, by large, are far from leading their lives the way the Almighty has outlined for them in the Holy Qur'an and the Sacred Sunna of His messenger Muhammad (SAW). This can be said especially about some governments of our Muslim countries which give Islam nothing but lip-service, annihilating their own citizens, casting terror in their hearts, burying dissidents alive in common graves, sending their armies to fight other Muslims, robbing their citizens of their freedom, assassinating their scholars, thinkers and philosophers only if the latter dissent, depriving them from their own national wealth, enforcing travel restrictions on them, encouraging sectarian clashes among them, razing them with bullets even in the holiest of their cities, collaborating with the enemies of their own people, and running police states in the ugliest manner the Muslim world has seen in modern times.

These governments, to our dismay, are supported by a large number of hired "scholars" and paid publishers who justify these atrocities and applaud the tyrants, quote the Holy Qur'an and the *hadith* in their defence simply because the latter are their own patrons... *Inna lillah wa inna ilayhi raji'oon, Was-salamo Alaikom.*

Yasin T. al-Jibouri, Editor

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
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ISLAMIC
ISSN 0748-0482
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RAJAB & SHA'BAN 1409/MARCH & APRIL 1989

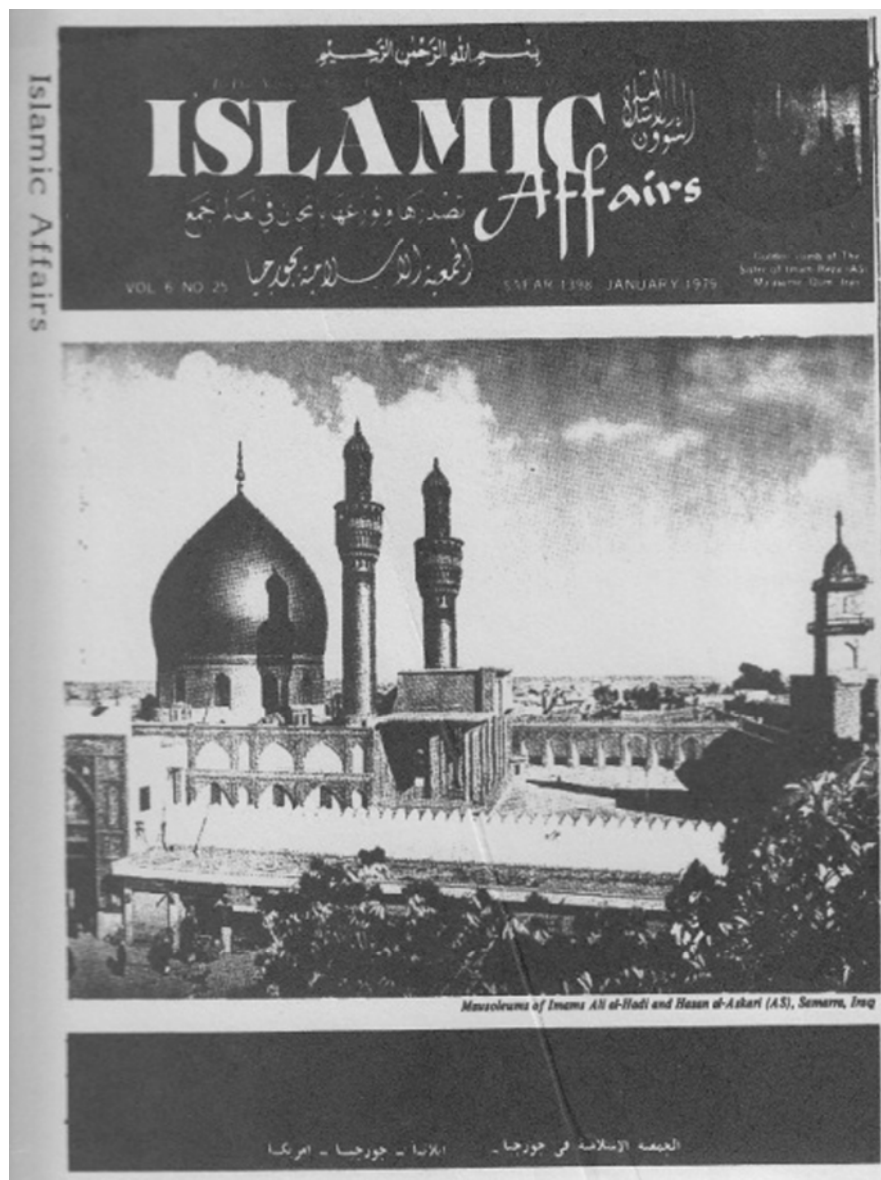
JESUS OF ISLAM PART I

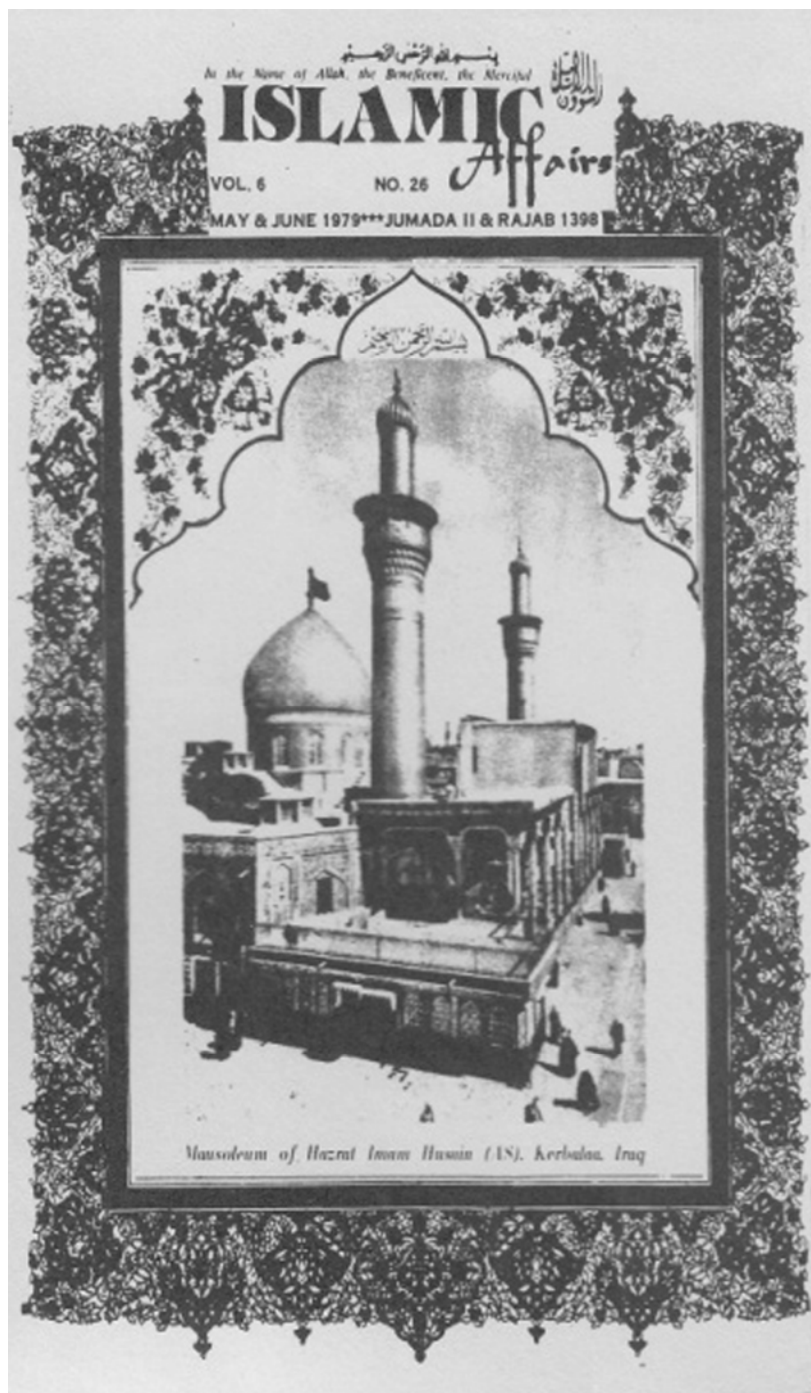
The objectives of these series are two: 1) to introduce to our Christian friends the Islamic views regarding Jesus Christ, peace be upon him, and 2) to prepare Muslims, especially the youth, to answer questions put forth to them by their Christian friends while debating Christ.

Nobody can deny the fact that Christianity of today is not similar to that of the early centuries of the Christian era. Today, for example, there are churches which not only fail to condemn homosexuality, they even perform "marriage ceremonies" for homosexual couples, thus contributing to the spread of the AIDS virus. The institution of the Church has become a very large commercial operation, a multi-billion dollar business. Early Christians considered Jerusalem as their spiritual center till the fourth century when that status was given to Rome instead. Jerusalem was the place where Christ started his preaching, challenging the stone-hearted Jewish rabbis who (like today's P.T.L. conglomerates) commercialized and monopolized the institution of the originally pristine Jewish faith. He was their antithesis in kindness, humility, simplicity, asceticism and spirituality. "I have been sent for the lost sheep of Israel," he asserted, attempting to correct the deviations of the Jewish faith from the Straight Path. While there was no racism in early Christianity, today you can find "white churches" and "black churches" and churches which loudly condemn other churches. While the early Commandments of Christianity were twelve in number, the first being: "Believe that God is One," as we are told by J.B. Firth and Theodore Zahn, among others, these commandments were reduced to ten, and the number of the original gospels also shrank from five to four (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), and a great deal of the contents of these four gospels were left out according to the dictates of the historic Nicea conference of 325 A.D. That conference was sponsored by Emperor Constantine who was fed up with the rifts within the relatively young Christian Church. It was there and then that the concept of Trinity, versus the Unitarian belief, was "canonized" and became an "official" doctrine of the Church despite cries of protest from numerous attendants of the conference such as Arius of North Africa, and Athanasius who, ironically, is considered to be the father of this creed. The latter reminded the attendants that Christ worshipped One and Only God, that he was a human, and that the Trinity was the product of a confused mind. The fifth gospel which was not canonized, and which was the most accurate of all, was the Gospel of Saint Barnabas of Cyprus. It contains facts supported by the Holy Qur'an such as the prediction that another prophet, who is described as *Parakletos*. This prediction is stated in the Holy Qur'an, 61:6 as follows:

And remember, Jesus the son of Mary said: "O Children of Israel! I am the apostle of God (sent) to you, confirming the Law (which came) before me, and giving glad tidings of an Apostle to come after me whose name shall be Ahmad." But when he came to them with clear signs, they said, "This is evident sorcery!"

The word 'apostle' in this verse is not different from the one in Hebrews 3:1 of the New Testament which refers to Jesus thus: "Consider Jesus, the Apostle." According to Islamic teachings both Jesus Christ and Muhammad, peace be upon them, were Apostles of the Almighty, bearers of His Message, conveyers of His Word, executors of His Will.

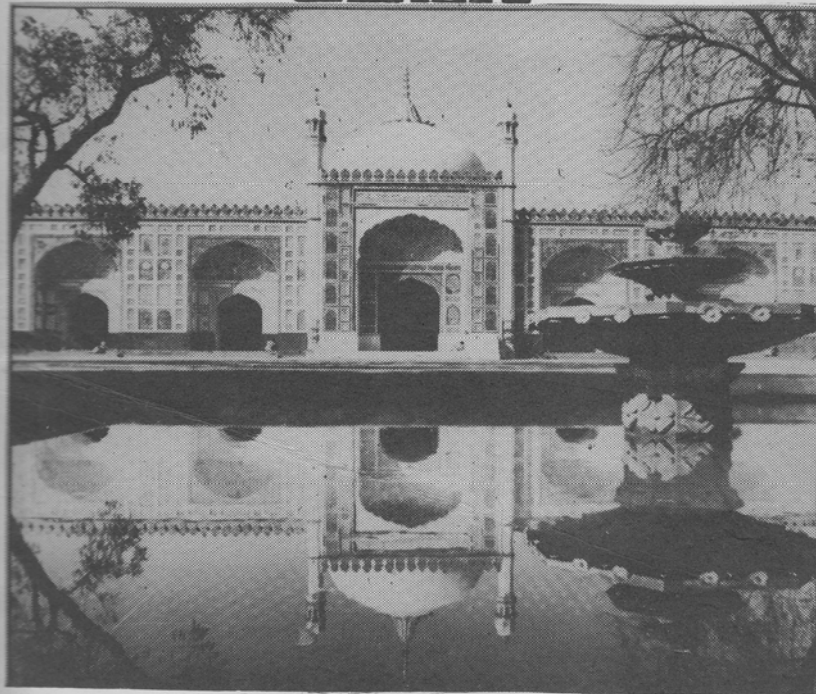




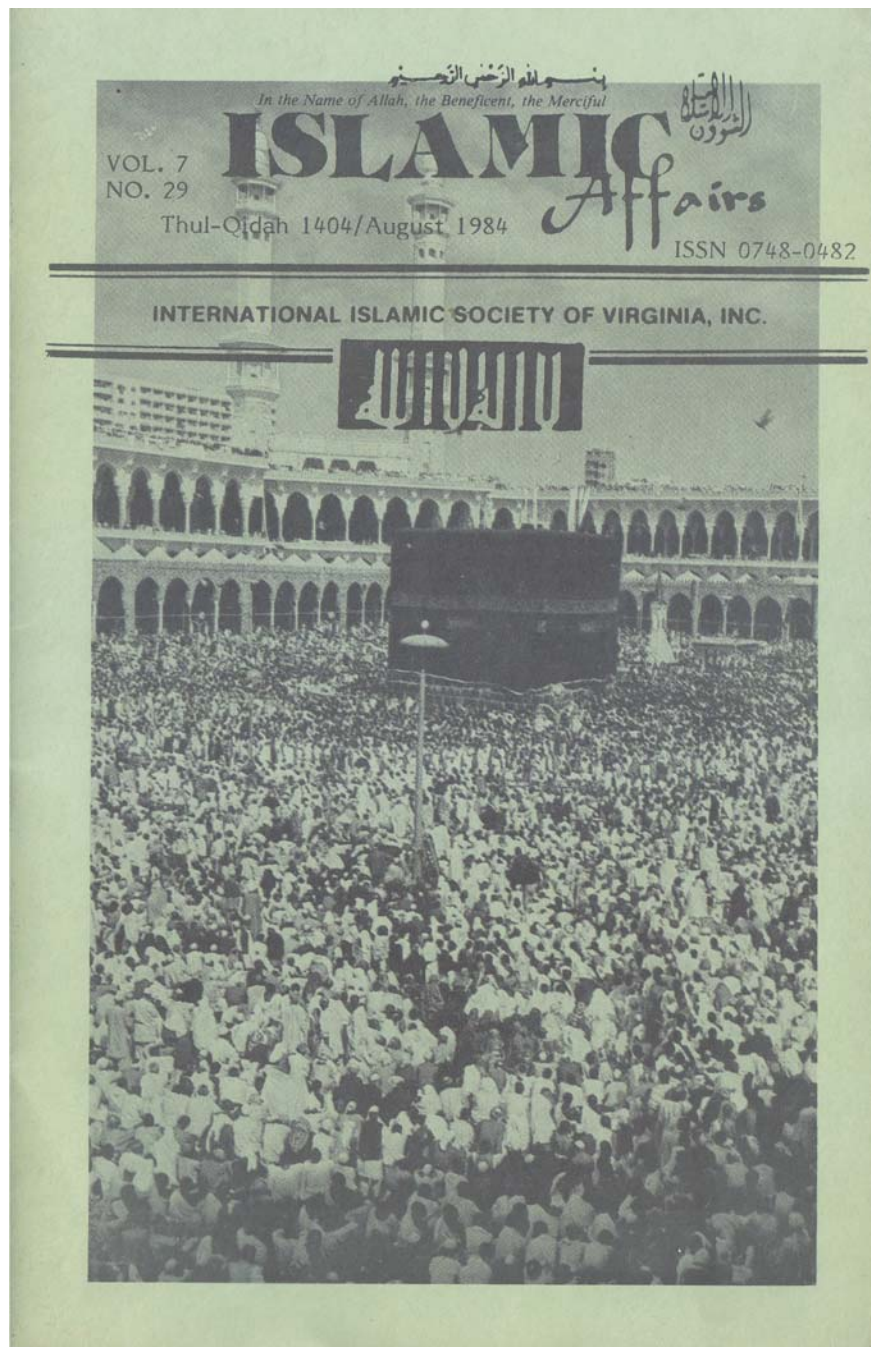
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful
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Jumada I 1404/February 1984

Founded in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1974

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



Jamia Masjid—Multan, Pakistan





بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
In the Name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Merciful

ISLAMIC *Affairs*
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INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA, INC.

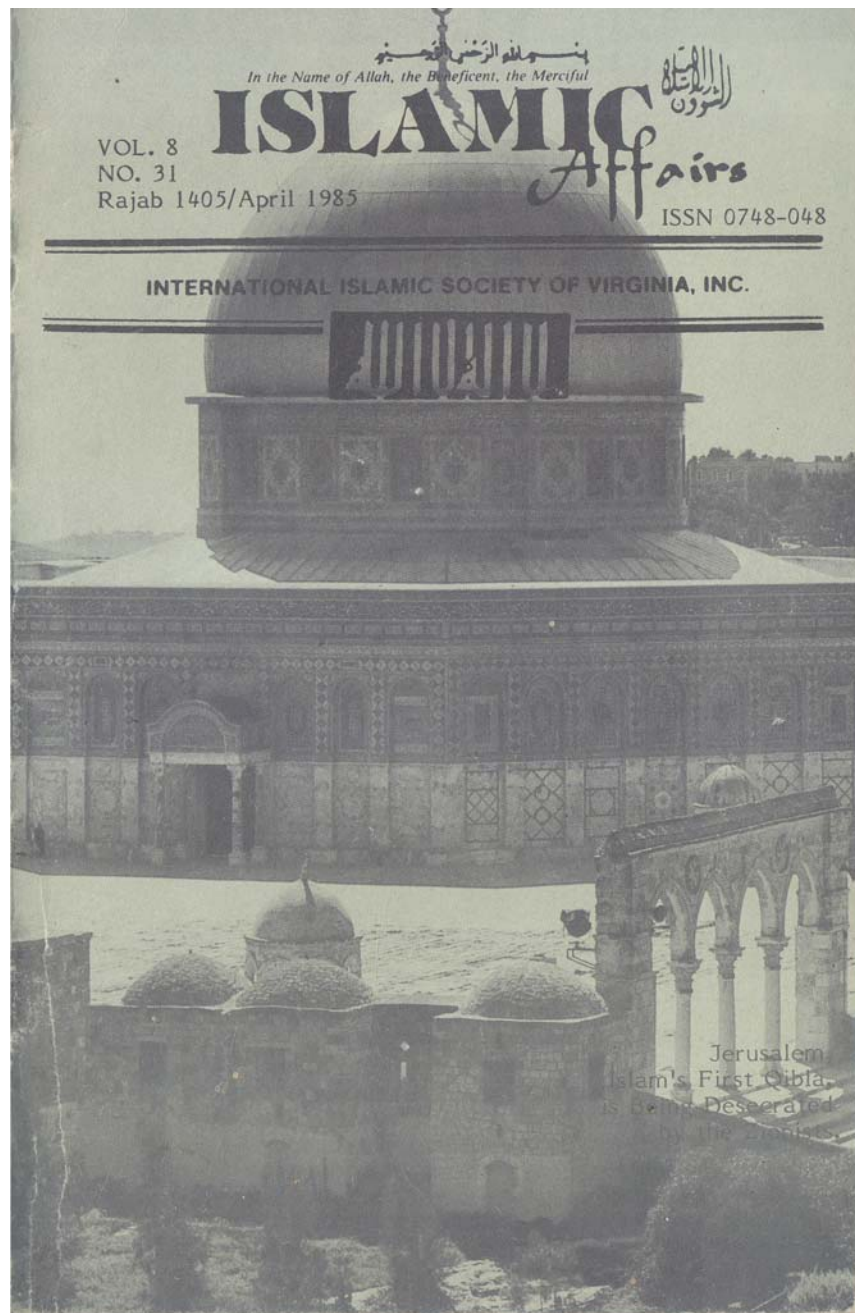
SPECIAL ISSUE

An Arab's home in Al-Khalil (Hebron) bull-dozed for alleged 'terrorist' activity.



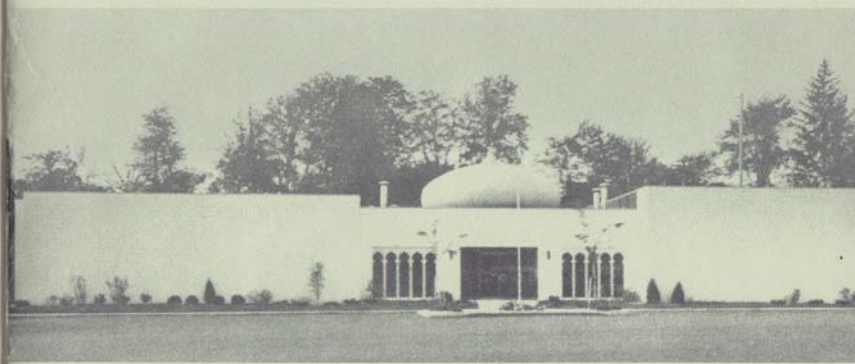
The Palestinians: Victims of Israeli Terrorism

Although waves of Palestinian refugees crossed the Allenby Bridge over the Jordan River in 1948 and 1967, equal numbers of Palestinians remain on the occupied West Bank and Gaza.



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
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"The Mother Mosque" - Cedar Rapids, Iowa



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ISLAM

- ▶ Introduction to Islam
- ▶ Islam in America
- ▶ The Muslim Experience
- ▶ Issues for Muslims in America

TIMELINES

[Islam in America](#)[Islam in the World](#)

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

DIRECTORY OF RELIGIOUS CENTERS

Islam in America

1178 CE Muslims Sail to America

A Chinese sea and travel record records that Muslim sailors journeyed to a land known as "Jiufen" (Javan) as the American continent. This document is mentioned in the publication *The Khotan Annals, 1933*.

1300s CE African Muslims to the New World

According to some scholars, Abu Bakari, a king of the Muslim state of Mali in West Africa, initiated a series of sea voyages to North America beginning in the early 1300s. About the same time, Mandingo Muslims from Mali and other parts of West Africa are said to have arrived in the Gulf of Mexico and traveled up the Mississippi River to explore the interior of the North American continent.

1530 CE African Slaves Begin to Arrive

During three centuries of slave trade, over 10 million Africans were forcibly brought to the shores of Cuba, Mexico, South and North America. Most were taken from West African peoples known as Fulas, Fula Jallon, Fula Toro, and Massina. Scholars estimate that 10-50 percent of these slaves were Muslim, although most were prevented from practicing their religion.

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AMERICA'S MANY RELIGIONS

Islam in America

1178 CE Muslims Sail to America

A Chinese source known as the Sung Document records that Muslim sailors journeyed to a land known as Mu-Lan-Pi, which some Muslims identify as the American continent. This document is mentioned in the publication *The Khotan Amirs*, 1933.

1300s CE African Muslims to the New World

According to some scholars, Abu Bakari, a king of the Muslim state of Mali in West Africa, initiated a series of sea voyages to North America beginning in the early 1300s. About the same time, Mandingo Muslims from Mali and other parts of West Africa are said to have arrived in the Gulf of Mexico and traveled up the Mississippi River to explore the interior of the North American continent.

1530 CE African Slaves Begin to Arrive

During three centuries of slave trade, over 10 million Africans were forcibly brought to the shores of Cuba, Mexico, South and North America. Most were taken from West African peoples known as Fulas, Fula Jallon, Fula Toro, and Massina. Scholars estimate that 10-50 percent of these slaves were Muslim, although most were prevented from practicing their religion.

1539 CE Spanish Explorers and Spanish Refugees

Estevanico of Azamor, a Moroccan Muslim, arrived in Florida with the expedition of Panfilo de Narvaez in 1527. He stayed in America and joined expeditions across the continent to Arizona and New Mexico. By the late 1700s, historical records indicated the presence of Spanish "Moors" living in South Carolina, many of whom were expelled from their homeland by edict of the Spanish Crown.

1807 CE Omar Ibn Said Arrives as a Slave in Charleston

Omar ibn Said was brought to Charleston, South Carolina, as a slave in 1807. He ran away to escape the hard labor, but was caught and imprisoned in North Carolina. Writing in unreadable script and speaking a language no one understood, he was branded a lunatic. Governor John Owen bought him and gave him minimal work, granting him a small house on the Owen estate and treating him more like a friend of the family. Said wrote an autobiography and maintained contact with other Muslims in the area.

1807 CE Freed Muslim Slave Remains in America

Yarrow Mamout, an African Muslim slave, was set free in Washington, D.C. He remained in the United States and became an early shareholder in the Columbia bank, the second chartered bank in the country. Today, portraits of Mamout hang in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and the Georgetown Public Library in Washington. He is said to have lived to be 128 years old.

1856 CE Muslim Trains Camels for U.S. Army

The United States cavalry hired a Muslim named Hajji Ali (nicknamed "Hi Jolly" in a mispronunciation) to experiment with raising camels in the Arizona desert.

1893 CE American Islamic Propaganda Movement Founded

Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb, one of the first Americans to embrace Islam, founded the American Islamic Propaganda Movement. At the 1893 Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago, he lectured on "The Spirit of Islam" and "The Influence of Islam on Social Conditions."

1900 CE First Recorded Muslim Prayers Held

Muslims of Arab descent in Ross, North Dakota, gathered in homes for the first recorded communal prayers held by American Muslims.

1908 CE Muslim Immigrants from the Ottoman Empire

Turks, Albanians, Kurds and Arabs from the provinces of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and other areas of the Ottoman Empire began to settle in North America in significant numbers.

1913 CE Moorish Science Temple of America

Timothy Drew (Noble Drew Ali), reportedly commissioned by the sultan of Morocco to teach Islam to African-Americans, established a Moorish Science Temple in Newark, New Jersey. He traveled around the country, encouraging African Americans to explore the Asiatic (Moorish) roots of African culture, to respect all divine prophets, to live virtuously and to work for racial equality.

1915 CE Albanian Muslim Mosque in Maine

Albanian Muslims built a mosque in Biddeford, Maine and established an Islamic association. In 1919, they established another

mosque in Waterbury, Connecticut. These were among the first Islamic associations in America.

1920 CE Mosque Built in Ross, North Dakota

The small Muslim community in Ross, North Dakota built a mosque for prayer gatherings. Due to the rapid assimilation of this small community, by 1948 the building was abandoned and later demolished.

1920 CE Red Crescent Society in Detroit

Muslims in Detroit established The Red Crescent Society, a Muslim charity modeled after the International Red Cross.

1921 CE Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam Comes to America

Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq founded a branch of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam in Chicago, Illinois. Preaching racial equality, this missionary movement was most successful in leading many African Americans to this sectarian form of Islam, until the ideology of the Nation of Islam began to exert more influence. Sadiq published a periodical called Moslem Sunrise.

1922 CE Tatars Build Mosque

Polish-speaking Tatar Muslims formed a congregation in 1917. It was led by Sam Rafelowich, son of a Polish imam. In 1922 the community built a mosque in Brooklyn; this mosque is still in use. The Tatars formed an association in New York called the American Mohammedan Society.

1923 CE A Mosque in Highland Park, Michigan

An Arabic-speaking employee of the Ford Motor Company built a mosque in Highland Park, Michigan. The mosque closed a few years later.

1925 CE A Mosque in Michigan City, Indiana

Records indicate the establishment of a mosque in Michigan City, Indiana.

1926 CE Universal Islamic Society in Detroit

Duse Muhammad Ali established an organization called the Universal Islamic Society in Detroit, Michigan. Its motto was "One God, One Aim, One Destiny." Ali had significant influence on Marcus Garvey and his movement of African unity.

1928 CE Moorish Science Temple of America

The Moorish Science movement of Noble Drew Ali became an incorporated religious organization in Chicago, Illinois. Members convened the first Moorish National Convention to encourage the economic independence of African-American businesses, participation in politics and the development of programs for poor inner-city youth.

1929 CE Noble Drew Ali Dies

Prior to the death of Noble Drew Ali, members of the Moorish Science Temple were involved in small confrontations with the white community as well as an internal leadership dispute. One challenger to the leadership of Noble Drew Ali was killed, and the police arrested and later released Ali. Ali died mysteriously a few weeks later, and members of the community were divided as to whether his successor would be considered a reincarnation of the fallen leader or not. Mainstream leadership passed to C. Kirkman Bey.

1930 CE The First Muslim Mosque in Pittsburgh

African-American Muslims establish the First Muslim Mosque in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

1933 CE The Nation of Islam

Wallace Ford (Fard Muhammad), the mystical figure who introduced the philosophy of the Nation of Islam disappeared in 1933 and was succeeded by Elijah Poole (Elijah Muhammad). Under Elijah Muhammad, the movement developed into a strong ethnic organization combatting white racism and converting African-Americans to a lifestyle influenced by Islam. A high percentage of African-American Muslims today were first exposed to Islam through the Nation. The activist Al Hajj Malik al-Shabazz (Malcolm X) and the boxer Muhammad Ali were two early adherents of this movement who later embraced orthodox Islam.

1934 CE The Mother Mosque of America

The Lebanese community in Cedar Rapids, Iowa opened its first mosque. This community claims its place of worship to be the oldest U.S. mosque, designed and built for Muslim worship, still in use today.

1939 CE The Islamic Mission Society

Sheikh Dawood Ahmed Faisal, a Muslim from the West Indies, founded the Islamic Mission Society in New York and began publication of a magazine, Muslim Sunrise.

1947 CE The Muslim Mosque of Sacramento

The oldest mosque on the West Coast, the Muslim Mosque of Sacramento, was established by Muslims from the Indian subcontinent in

the same year that their homeland was partitioned. Many of these immigrant Muslims originally came via ship to the port cities of Vancouver and San Francisco in the early 1900s, and later migrated to the Sacramento Valley in search of farming opportunities. Today, the Muslim Mosque of Sacramento is one of a number of thriving mosques in the city, with a diverse membership.

1948 CE Ahmadiyya National Convention

The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam gathered delegates from its major mission centers in Chicago, Cleveland, Kansas City, Washington, D.C., and Pittsburgh and from smaller communities to elect national secretaries, set up educational and social work programs and organize for the propagation of the faith.

1950 CE Ahmadiyya Headquarters Moves to Washington

Khalil Nasir, national leader of the Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam, moved the headquarters of the organization to the American Fazi Mosque on Leroy Place in NW Washington, DC. In 1994, it relocated to its present headquarters in Masjid Bait ur-Rahman in Silver Spring, Maryland.

1952 CE U.S. Military Recognizes Islam

Muslims in the Armed Services successfully sued to be allowed to identify themselves as "Muslim." They had previously been denied this right because Islam was not recognized as a legitimate religion by the U.S. Military.

1953 CE The Federation of Islamic Associations

The first national Muslim conference was held in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1952, with four hundred Muslims from around North America in attendance. This conference laid the groundwork for the Federation of Islamic Associations of the United States and Canada (FIA) which was founded in July of 1953. The federation's leaders were American-born, educated, professionally successful and military veterans: Abdullah Igram of the Cedar Rapids community served as the first President. The FIA emphasized education and public relations for the Muslim communities and provided a sense of identity and community for American Muslims.

c. 1955 CE State Street Masjid

Sheikh Dawood Ahmed Faisal established the State Street Masjid in New York City to serve the African-American Muslim community. The Dar ul-Islam movement was born from this masjid, and it is still an active Muslim center today.

1957 CE President Eisenhower Dedicates Islamic Center

The Islamic Center of Washington, D.C., was conceived and built by Abraham Joseph Essa Howar, an immigrant from Jerusalem, with significant assistance from the local diplomatic community. Several predominantly Muslim countries contributed to the effort. President Dwight D. Eisenhower dedicated the Center, citing the "strong bond of friendship with Islamic nations" the United States has enjoyed and the multitude of Muslim contributions to American society.

1962 CE Muhammad Speaks

The newspaper Muhammad Speaks became the largest minority weekly publication in the country, reaching 800,000 readers at its peak. It began as the voice of the Nation of Islam, but as a part of the transition away from the Nation, the newspaper changed names, first to Bilalian News, later to The A.M. Journal. This publication is now known as The Muslim Journal.

1962 CE Islam is Constitutionally Protected "Religion"

In the case of *Fulwood v. Clemmer*, concerning religious services for Muslims in prison, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia determined that Islam qualifies for constitutional protection since it meets the court's definition of religion as "theistic" (involving a belief in a supreme being) and of "ultimate concern" to the believer's life. In its decision, the court ordered prisons to provide facilities for religious services to Muslims just as to Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish inmates.

1963 CE First Dar ul-Islam Movement

African-American converts to Islam sought to create an alternative Islamic community in New York City where they could live out their ideals and participate in the militant black challenge to the white establishment. This first attempt broke apart after 1965, but was reorganized in 1967.

1963 CE The Islamic Center of America in Detroit, Michigan

The Shi'i community of Dearborn, Michigan, built the first Shi'i mosque in North America, the Islamic Center of America, on Joy Road in Detroit. The shaykh, Imam Mohammad Jawad Chirri, solicited funds from Jamal Abdul Nasser, then president of Egypt and a Sunni Muslim, for the mosque's construction. Previously, this community had worshipped in Sunni mosques and had maintained a separate identity through social functions.

1963 CE Muslim Students Association

The Muslim Students Association (MSA) was organized to assist foreign Muslim students in American colleges. The MSA now has branches at more than 100 colleges nationwide. As the generations of students graduated and settled in the U.S. the MSA gave birth to the Islamic Medical Association (IMA) and the Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS) in the 1970s, and to the Islamic Society

of North America in 1982.

1964 CE The Islamic Center of New England

The immigrant Muslim community that had grown up for two generations around the Fore River Shipyard in Quincy, Massachusetts, built the first mosque in New England. The Islamic Center of New England continues to be a focal point for Muslim life in the region, providing leadership in a regional association of the dozens of Islamic centers established since.

1965 CE Assassination of Malcolm X

Malcolm X, who had spoken out against the racial teachings of the Nation of Islam and embraced the broader multiethnic teachings of orthodox Islam, was killed as he delivered a speech in Harlem. At the time of his death, he was known as Al Hajj Malik al-Shabazz.

1965 CE Immigration and Nationality Act

This act ended the quota system, enacted in 1924, which had virtually halted immigration from Asia to the United States for over forty years, and placed significant limitations on immigrants from non-European countries. Following 1965, growing numbers of immigrants settled in America; many were Muslim.

1967 CE Indian Muslims Organize

Immigrant Muslims from India organized the Consultative Committee of Indian Muslims in order to make the American public aware of the plight of Muslims in India. The Committee was active within the MSA for several years, before its main functions were assumed by ICNA and relief committees of ISNA.

1967 CE Dar ul-Islam Movement Begins Again

African-American Muslims broke away from the State Street Mosque and established their own center in Brooklyn, under the leadership of Imam Yahya Abdul-Kareem. After a clash with FBI officials who desecrated the mosque, the brotherhood committed itself to building a national Dar ul-Islam federation of Sunni Muslim family communities.

1968 CE Formation of Hanafi Movement

The Hanafi Madhhab Center was founded in New York by Hamas Abdul Khaalis, and later moved to Washington, D.C. At one point, the movement had over 1,000 members. In 1977, Khaalis and some followers seized three buildings in Washington and held hostages for more than a day. Khaalis is now in prison. This violent outbreak marked a crisis in American Muslim history.

1968 CE First North American Jamat Khana

Immigrant Nizari Ismailis established the first Jamat Khana (house of congregation) in the United States.

1970 CE Formation of Ansaru Allah

Isa Muhammad, a former member of the Nation of Islam dissatisfied with the leadership of Elijah Muhammad and with Noble Drew Ali's Moorish Science Temple, created a new black religious sect called Ansaru Allah ("helpers of God") in Brooklyn, New York.

c. 1970 CE Dar ul-Islam Begins Expansion

After moving to the new Ya-Sin mosque in Brooklyn, the Dar ul-Islam movement organized ministries of Propagation, Defense, Information, Culture, Education, Health and Welfare, and Protocol. By the mid-1970s, over 31 mosque-based communities were joined by a contract of allegiance; they encouraged the practice of traditional Islam among African Americans in the United States. In the early 1980s, Imam Yahya Abdul-Kareem declared that the Dar ul-Islam would now be part of an international Sufi community under the leadership of Shaykh Mubarik Ali Jilani Hashmi; those who follow Jilani are now Sufis.

1971 CE Islamic Circle of North America

A group of South Asian immigrant Muslims created the Islamic Circle of North America in order to propagate Islam in the United States. ICNA produces educational materials and organizes annual conferences to discuss issues facing the American Muslim community.

1971 CE Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship

Sri Lankan Sufi teacher Bawa Muhaiyaddeen established the Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship in Philadelphia. His followers, from a variety of religious and non-religious, American and immigrant backgrounds, initially did not identify themselves as a "Muslim" community. The Fellowship has since developed into a thriving community with a stronger Islamic orientation.

1970s CE Muslim Professional Associations

The Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers was formed in 1971, and the Association of Muslim Social Scientists in 1972.

1973 CE Shi'ah Mission to Georgia

Yasin al-Jibouri established the Islamic Society of Georgia, which grew primarily through the conversion of African Americans. The Society distributed literature from Iran, East Africa, India and Pakistan which presented Islamic doctrine from a Shi'i perspective.

1975 CE Elijah Muhammad Dies

Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam movement, dies and is succeeded by his son, Warith Deen Mohammed. Warith Deen disbanded the Nation of Islam as an organization and led a majority of its followers toward more universal and orthodox Islam. Imam W. Deen Mohammed is now considered one of the most influential Muslims in the United States.

1977 CE Islamic Coordinating Council of North America

The Muslim World League, an organization established in Makkah in 1962 to foster the cause of Islam around the world, has provided dozens of trained imams for mosques in the United States. The League sponsored the first Islamic Conference of North America in Newark, New Jersey, drawing Muslim representatives from around the United States, who then organized the Islamic Coordinating Council of North America. This Council encourages cooperation and coordination between various communities and national organizations of Muslims.

1977 CE Farrakhan Begins Reorganization of the Nation of Islam

Two years after the death of Elijah Muhammad, Minister Louis Farrakhan officially declared his intention to reestablish the Nation of Islam "on the platform of the Honorable Elijah Muhammad." Farrakhan rejected the reforms of Warith Deen Mohammed, reaffirming the leadership of Elijah Muhammad as Prophet and insisting that continuing white racism still required the strength of an African-American Islam.

1977 CE Chicago Muslims Initiate Educational Publications Project

The Muslim Community Center of Chicago received support from King Abdulaziz University to develop a full educational curriculum in Islamic studies, including graded levels of textbooks, workbooks, activities, teachers manuals and other aids. Kazi Publications distributes these materials to Islamic centers around the country.

1981 CE International Institute of Islamic Thought

This independent research institute was founded to revive and promote Islamic scholarship. The Institute publishes college-level books offering Islamic perspectives on various academic disciplines, conducts seminars, workshops and conventions and raises funds for fellowships in Islamic studies research.

1982 CE International Islamic Society of Virginia

Yasin al-Jibouri, who initiated the Shi'i mission in Georgia, established the International Islamic Society of Virginia. The organization's goal is to provide with reading materials about Islam.

1982 CE United Muslims of America

Muslims in the San Francisco Bay Area formed an organization called United Muslims of America, said to be the first American Muslim organization designed specifically for political action. Chapters later grew in Sacramento and Los Angeles.

1982 CE Islamic Society of North America

The Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) was established in Plainfield, Indiana, by the leaders of Islamic student and professional organizations. ISNA is an umbrella organization for many active Islamic groups, including educational, youth, professional, community and relief organizations.

c. 1985 CE All-American Political Action Committee

The Islamic Society of Greater Houston formed the All-American Political Action Committee (AAMPAC) in order to encourage Muslims to speak out on political issues of concern to them. By 1987, AAMPAC reported 2,000 members in Houston and Dallas.

1986 CE Moorish Americans Celebrate Centennial

Members of the Moorish Science Temple celebrated the centennial of the birth of Noble Drew Ali. On this occasion, the governors of several states issued official proclamations recognizing the spiritual and ethical contributions of the Moorish community and its promotion of good citizenship.

1986 CE Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Dies

When Shaykh Bawa Muhaiyaddeen died, he did not designate a new shaykh for the Bawa Muhaiyaddeen Fellowship but left two imams in charge of Friday prayers. The Fellowship maintained its organizational structure and conduct. Books and videotaped discourses of the Shaykh are important to the community; classes in the Qur'an and Arabic and the practice of Islamic rituals serve to sustain those who affirm a Muslim identity.

1988 CE Muslim Public Affairs Council

The Islamic Center of Southern California formed the Muslim Political Action Committee, later named the Muslim Public Affairs Council. The Council's aim is to articulate Muslim perspectives on political issues, to inform legislators about Islam, to speak out against discrimination, and to encourage greater political participation by Muslims in the American system.

1989 CE Georgia Jamat Khana Opens

The Ismaili community opened a major religious and cultural center in Atlanta, Georgia.

1990 CE American Muslim Council

Muslims organized a conference called "Muslims Against Apartheid" for Muslims in the United States to discuss their opposition to apartheid in South Africa. Out of this conference grew the American Muslim Council, based in Washington, D.C., which seeks to raise the political consciousness of the Muslim community and to speak out against instances of discrimination against Muslims.

1990 CE Murder of Rashad Khalifa

Rashad Khalifa, an Egyptian-born scientist who served as imam of Masjid Tucson for eleven years, was murdered in the mosque before morning prayers. Khalifa was a controversial author who used computer analysis of the Qur'an to establish its miraculous character, to determine the date of the end of the world, and to prove he was the messenger of God to the New World. He condemned Muslims who followed the Hadith and Sunnah and practiced what he considered the "worship of Muhammad." Khalifa's followers are known as United Submitters International, who publish a journal called Submitters Perspective.

1990 CE Proclamation of the City of Savannah, Georgia

The city council of Savannah, Georgia, issued a proclamation in recognition of Islam and support for the Muslim community, stating, "Al-Islam has been a vital part of the development of the United States of America, and the City of Savannah, Georgia, by promoting obedience to the established laws of the land and by encouraging abstinence from all that is wrong." It concluded by proclaiming that: "The religion of Al-Islam be given equal acknowledgment and recognition as the other religious bodies of our great city. "

1991 CE The Islamic Cultural Center of New York

Sponsored by diplomatic delegations from a number of predominantly Muslim countries, the Islamic Cultural Center of New York has become a monumental sign of the Muslim presence in New York City. Designed by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, this house of worship "for the 21st century" sits at the corner of Third Ave. and 96th St. on Manhattan's Upper East Side.

1991 CE Muslim Prayer in the U.S. House of Representatives

On June 25, 1991 Imam Siraj Wahhaj, spiritual leader of the Masjid al-Taqwa community in Brooklyn, New York, offered the opening prayer in the United States House of Representatives, becoming the first Muslim ever to do so.

1991 CE Islamic Prison Foundation

Several Muslim organizations joined together to form an educational foundation for prisoners. This Foundation provides information about Islam to inmates in the nation's prisons upon request.

1991 CE Muslim Members of the Military

The Muslim Members of the Military (MMM) held their first "Unity in Uniform" conference to address the absence of Muslim chaplains in the armed services. There are over 5,000 Muslims currently on active duty in the United States military.

1991 CE Muslim Mayor Elected in Texas

Charles Bilal became the first Muslim mayor in the United States when he was elected to govern the town of Kountze, Texas.

1992 CE Muslim Prayer in the U.S. Senate

Imam W. Deen Mohammed, African-American spiritual leader and respected Islamic spokesperson, opened the U.S. Senate with a prayer for guidance on February 6, 1992. This was the first time the invocation at the opening of Senate business was offered by a Muslim.

1992 CE Muslims Offer Invocations in California Legislature

On April 2, 1992, California recognized the significant presence of Muslims in the state by inviting two Muslim imams to lead the opening prayers. Imam Dawud Abdus Salaam delivered the invocation for the Senate and Imam Enrique A. Rasheed did the same for the State Assembly.

1993 CE Muslim Organizations Coordinate Ramadan Observances

The Islamic Shura Council of North America, composed of ISNA, ICNA, the Ministry of Imam W. Deen Mohammed, and the community under the leadership of Imam Jamil al-Amin, agreed on procedures for the sighting of the moon which begins and ends the holy month of Ramadan. This was an important step in American Muslim unity, as many ethnic Islamic centers still look to authorities in their home countries for official guidance on such matters.

1995 CE First Jamat Khana Built in the United States

Groundbreaking Ceremonies for the first Jamat Khana built as such in the United States were held in Dallas, Texas. Gary Blanscet, Mayor of Carrollton, was in attendance.

1996 CE Breaking of the Fast on Capitol Hill

On the evening of February 13, 1996, during the month of Ramadan, the daily fast was broken in the Hart Senate Office Building. This observance was followed by prayers. Muslims from around the U.S. were in attendance, as were four members of Congress. Among those in attendance was Connecticut Senator Joseph Lieberman, an Orthodox Jew.

1996 CE First Eid at White House

On February 20, 1996, Hillary Rodham Clinton greeted an American Muslim delegation at the White House on the occasion of the feast of Eid al-Fitr at the end of the month of Ramadan.

2001 CE World Trade Center & Pentagon Attacks

On September 11, 2001, terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and Pentagon in the United States, claiming to act in the name of Islam. The attack, for which the militant organization Al Qaeda, under the leadership of Osama bin Laden, took responsibility, sparked enormous change and challenges for relations between Muslims and non-Muslims within the U.S. and throughout the globe. The events of 9/11 forced all Americans, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, to consider Islam in global and local contexts, challenging and questioning what it meant to be Muslim when the faith had been so loudly and violently usurped by a small minority of Muslims whose views are considered by most Muslims to be extreme, and for many, un-Islamic. The 9/11 attacks caused many non-Muslim Americans to be suddenly suspicious of all Muslims, causing reactions that targeted Muslims – from hate crimes that targeted Muslims and mosques, to increased surveillance of Muslim communities by federal authorities. In turn, American Muslims began to actively and collectively reach out to fellow Americans to correct misperceptions about Islam that were instigated by the 9/11 attacks, opening the doors of their mosques and cultural centers to all to show to Americans the peace-loving understanding of Islam to which a vast majority of Muslims worldwide adhere.

2003 CE The Buffalo Six

Six Yemeni-Americans in Buffalo, NY, known as the “Buffalo Six” and “Lackawanna Six,” were convicted of supporting al-Qaeda materially. They were all American citizens who had received training by Al Qaeda in Afghanistan in 2001. All six eventually pleaded guilty to “providing material support to a [...] terrorist organization” and received prison sentences, the longest of which was for ten years.

2006 CE Keith Ellison becomes first Muslim elected to Congress

In 2006, Keith Ellison of Minnesota became the first Muslim elected to Congress. He was sworn into the U.S. House of Representatives on the Qur’an that was owned by Thomas Jefferson. Ellison was re-elected in 2010.

2008 CE Film: “Obsession: Radical Islam’s War Against the West”

Millions of copies of this 2005 film, which depicts a perceived threat of radical Islam to the West, were distributed for free prior to 2008 presidential elections, targeting swing states in particular. While the controversial film itself was criticized for construing Islam in a monolithically negative manner, many questioned the political implications of its wide and intentional distribution.

2008 CE America’s First Muslim Liberal Arts College Opens

Zaytuna College opened its doors in Berkeley, CA, to encourage deeper engagement between Muslims and scholars of Islam and a traditional liberal arts education. Operating under the motto “Where Islam meets America,” the school follows a precedent already set by Christian and Jewish colleges to foster a multidisciplinary approach to education while simultaneously maintaining a discourse rooted in religious tradition.

2010 CE Opposition to Park51, an Islamic Cultural Center in Lower Manhattan

Plans to construct an Islamic cultural center in Lower Manhattan caused great controversy and much protest throughout the United States. Dubbed by misinformed media as the “Ground Zero Mosque”, opponents of the center’s construction claimed that the site for the Muslim cultural center and worship space would be too close to Ground Zero, claiming it would be “insensitive” to do so. Despite continued challenges to the project, both internally and externally, plans for the construction of the center, in that location, continued to move forward.

2010 – 2012 CE Murfreesboro Islamic Center Controversy

In 2009, the Islamic Center of Murfreesboro, in Tennessee, made plans to construct a larger cultural center due to support the growing Muslim community in the area. Despite initial approval by the town planning commission, vocal and even violent opponents protested, going so far as to claim that Islam was not a religion and that the center could pose a Constitutional threat. After two years of court disputes and vandalism and arsenal attacks on the property, members of the Murfreesboro Islamic Center were finally granted official permission again to occupy their property.

2010 CE Anti-Shariah Legislation Proposed

In 2010, Oklahoma residents voted overwhelmingly for a ballot measure that would amend the state constitution to explicitly ban Shariah, or, loosely, “Islamic law”, from state courts. CAIR, the Council on American-Islamic Relations, took the proposed amendment to court, which resulted in a January 2012 ruling that it was unconstitutional to ban Shariah. Oklahoma is one of two dozen states that

have considered anti-Shariah legislation, which some attribute to an Islamophobic movement financed by a group of right-wing conservatives, including through the controversial Center for Security Policy that disseminated a report on the perceived threat of Shariah.

2010 – 2011 CE Qur'an "Put on Trial" in Florida

Pastor Terry Jones of the Christian Dove World Outreach Center based in Gainesville, FL, announced his plan to burn two hundred copies of the Qur'an on the ninth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, garnering much media attention and causing international outrage that caused massive and fatal protests throughout the world. While he called off his plan to burn the Muslim holy book on September 11th of that year, due to national security concerns that his threat caused, he "put the Qur'an on trial" in 2011, claiming to find the scripture guilty of "crimes against humanity" and subsequently burning it in his church. Jones' behavior has been widely perceived as hateful and bigoted and has been condemned by American and global leaders, including President Obama.

2011 CE American Muslim Congressional Hearings

As Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee for the House of Representatives, Peter King called for and held Congressional hearings that questioned the extent to which American Muslims were cooperating in efforts to eradicate homegrown terrorism. Opposition to the hearings, which came from fellow congressmen as well groups like the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC), Amnesty International, and the Sikh Coalition, claimed that such targeted generalization of Muslims was divisive and wrong.

2011 CE "All-American Muslim" on TLC

This television series depicting daily lives of American Muslims in Dearborn, MI, broadcast for one season on The Learning Channel (TLC), emphasizing on mainstream television the common routines shared by Muslim and non-Muslim Americans alike.

2012 CE Film: "The Innocence of Muslims"

A provocative and anti-Muslim film trailer, which denigrates the Prophet Muhammad, was launched on YouTube with Arabic dubbing, sparking anti-American protests around the world. The film prompted debate about Internet censorship and freedom of expression domestically and globally.

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